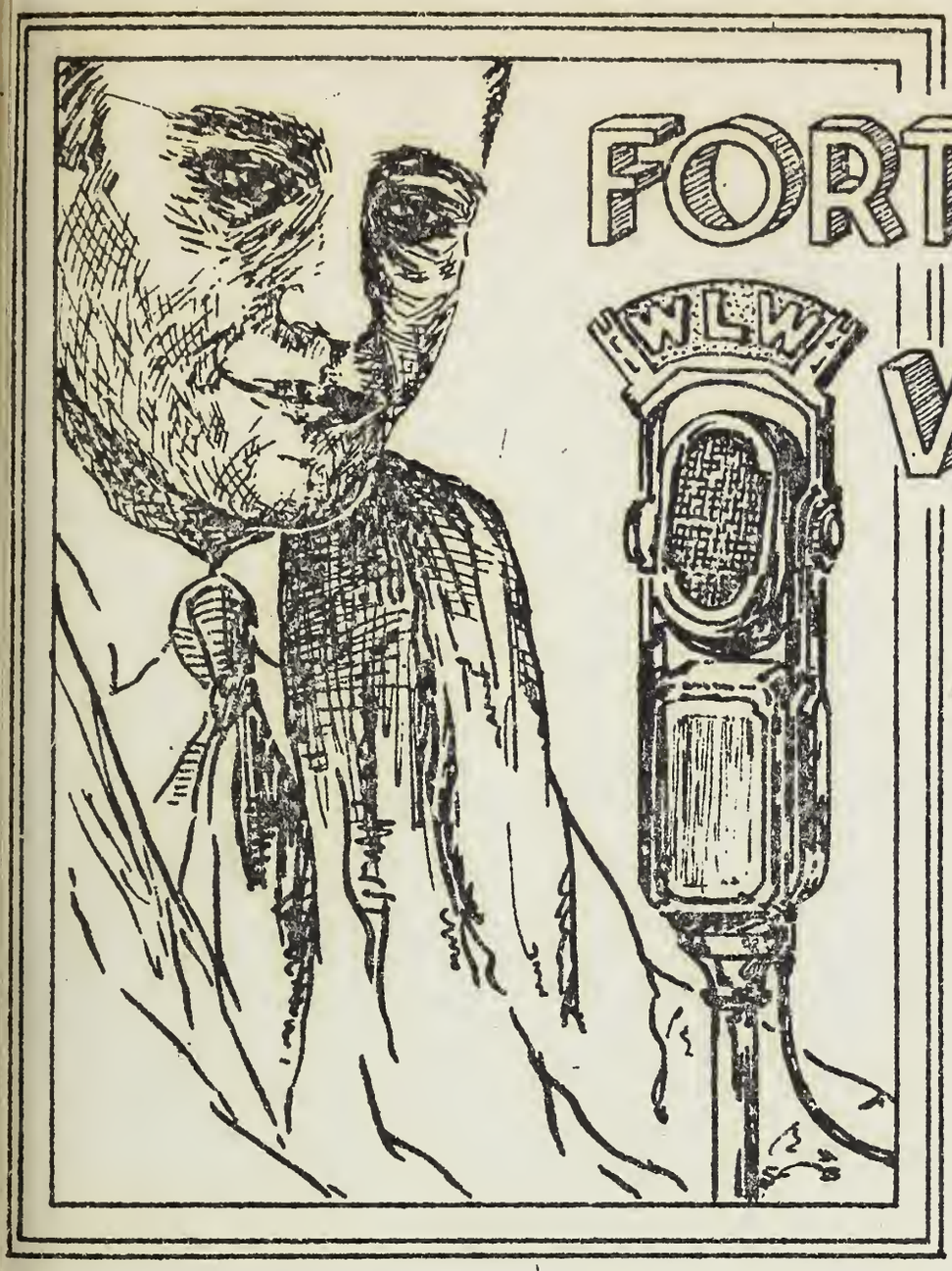

FORTUNES WASHED AWAY

A Series of Dramatizations of Better Land Use

No. 136 November 30, 1940 1:15 p.m.

"FORTY DOLLARS TO FINANCIAL SECURITY"

W·L·W CINCINNATI

United States Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service
Dayton · Ohio

ORGAN: Fanfare...

GIRL

Five old hens, two hairless pigs, and a Jersey calf with a busted leg...

BOY

And a boy and a girl in love, who wanted to own a farm.

SOUND: Clap of thunder...

ANNOUNCER

Forty Dollars to Financial Security! The 136th episode of Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

ANNOUNCER

Followers of Marquette and Joliet found their way up the Maumee, the St. Marys, the Auglaize, and they found what is now Auglaize County, Ohio. This was the Black Swamp district, occupying the great dividing ridge between the headwaters of Lake Erie and the Ohio River. The Black Swamp has been drained, now, and mile after mile of farm tile, and mile after mile of drainage ditches form a great network -- lifeline of Auglaize County. This is the story of Jim and Pauline Bachman, young farmers of Auglaize County...a young couple who had plenty of ideas, plenty of determination, but no money. Do you remember 1932? Jim and Pauline Bachman do. For it was then...

ORGAN: SHINE ON, HARVEST MOON, fading into

SOUND: Frog croaking softly in distance...

JIM

Well, here we are, a boy and a girl...graduated from Ohio State...

PAULINE

And kicked right out into a world of depression.

JIM

Depression, with capital letters.

PAULINE

And yet, maybe someday, after we're married, we'll look back at it all and say, "if there hadn't been a depression we wouldn't be successful farmers."

JIM

I hope you're right, Pauline. I hope we have a farm of our own someday.

PAULINE

Listen!

JIM

To what? Oh, you mean that frog.

PAULINE

I think the moon has gone to that old bullfrog's heart. He's singing a love song to his lady friend.

JIM (laughing softly)

Always the sentimentalist, always imagining. Hey...you're not in college any more. You're out in the cold, cruel world. That artistic streak in you!

PAULINE (bristling)

Yes, and if you'd forget to be so blamed practical, Jim! But you won't. You can't get above your old agricultural economics.

JIM (sighing)

Here we go again, the eternal argument. (PAUSE) Aw, Pauline, don't be mad. I can be sentimental, and you know it. Honest, do you know what I was planning to say tonight?

PAULINE

I'm not angry.

JIM

Pauline, why don't we get married now?

PAULINE

Oh, Jim...if we only could.

JIM

Why can't we? We will someday.

PAULINE

We have...just ourselves. No dowrys or legacies for us, Jim. We spent ours on a college education.

JIM

They can't take that away from us. Let's try, Pauline. We can manage some way. Someday we'll own our own farm.

PAULINE (AFTER A PAUSE)

All right, Jim.

ORGAN: SHINE ON, HARVEST MOON, fading into....

SOUND: Old automobile coming to stop. Door opens...

GRANDPA

Hello, Pauline.

PAULINE

Grandpa!

GRANDPA

What's this I hear about you two kids going to get married?

PAULINE

We are married, grandpa.

JIM

This afternoon. Two whole hours.

PAULINE

Yes sir...Missus Jim Bachman now.

GRANDPA (chuckling)

Well, well...and without a penny to your name.

JIM

Oh, no! I've saved up forty dollars and we hope to get a loan, somewhere, somehow, to buy our own farm.

PAULINE

And we've rented a 14-room house, with a pantry. Of course, it isn't much of a house.

GRANDPA

What in thunder did you want with a 14-room house?

JIM

It's about all we could afford, Mr. Solms. Fourteen rooms, yes... but you should see it!

PAULINE

Oh, it's the most beautiful wreck you ever saw. (ALL LAUGH).

GRANDPA

Well, here now...let me see....here's something for you two.

PAULINE

Five dollars! Oh, grandpa, you shouldn't...

GRANDPA

Nonsense! I should get you something personal...but you know how it is. I don't go to town much, and...

JIM

Thanks a lot, Mr. Solms.

GRANDPA

Forget it. And now, come on in the house and we'll celebrate.

JIM

Thanks, but we've got to get on. I've got to do the chores before supper.

PAULINE

Supper! Great Scott, Jim. I forgot all about supper. What are we going to eat for supper?

JIM

And what are we going to eat for breakfast? And for dinner tomorrow?

PAULINE

And what are we going to cook it on? We haven't even got a stove! (ALL LAUGH).

ORGAN: BRIEF BRIDGE DENOTING LAPSE OF TIME.

SOUND: Door opens and shuts. Clinking of kitchenware...

PAULINE

I'm glad you're here. If this old oil stove had been in the chickenhouse another year it wouldn't even smoke.

JIM

It'd be better if it wouldn't. Golly, it smokes. No wonder! You got the wick up too high. Fine campfire girl you are.

PAULINE

Enough of that, smarty. Look what Aunt Lula brought us. Her old broken down porch chair. But you can fix that rocker and...

JIM

Sure I can fix it. I'll just saw out a piece of hickory...

PAULINE

If you had a saw, and if you had a piece of hickory.

JIM

Oh, I've got a saw now. Dad let me have an old one. And guess what I got over at Joe's this morning...a Jersey calf.

PAULINE

You don't mean it. A Jersey calf. Good one?

JIM

Well, it's...all right. Nice little Jersey bull calf...make good veal in a little while, too. Course, it's got a broken leg...

PAULINE (snorting)

Oh my goodness!

JIM

Oh, I put splints on it, and carried it home real carefully.

PAULINE (laughing)

Great snakes! My side and body! If it wasn't so funny, it wouldn' be so funny.

JIM

What do you mean?

PAULINE

Setting up housekeeping like this. We haven't got that loan yet -- all we have is a 14-room house, an old discarded oil stove from the chicken house, two old backless chairs from grandma's, Uncle Elmer's old kitchen table...

JIM

That's a good walnut table.

PAULINE

One good 4-poster bed and dresser, two drygoods boxes for company chairs...

JIM

196 acres of land and nothing to farm it with...

PAULINE

...five old hens, two hairless pigs, and now a Jersey calf -- with a busted leg! (BOTH LAUGH AND FADE).

ORGAN: BRIEF BRIDGE DENOTING LAPSE OF TIME.

SOUND: Door opens and slams...

JIM

Pauline! Pauline! We've got it!

PAULINE

What, Jim? Hey, settle down, little man.

JIM

But look...

PAULINE

Now take your time.

JIM (deliberately mincing his words)

My dear Missus Bachman. You recall that time we went to see Mr. Hays of the Farm Security Administration.

PAULINE

Yes.

JIM

And you remember that the committee had to approve the tenant-purchase loan?

PAULINE

Yes.

JIM

Missus Bachman, the committee has approved our request. Now we can buy that farm.

ORGAN: Sneak in GOOD GREEN ACRES OF HOME.

PAULINE

Our own farm. Our own farm. Oh, Jim...I never did feel that we were getting any place renting. I've wanted a farm of our own, before we fooled around and lost our enthusiasm. Now we have something we can get our teeth into -- before we get old and lose our teeth.

ANNOUNCER

That is the true story of Jim and Pauline Bachman, of Auglaize County, Ohio -- a young couple with an ambition to own a farm, so they'd have something to get their teeth into. And now, once again we turn to the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, and here is Gene Charles.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT

CHARLES

Thanks, _____. You know, until now I've never been willing to admit that I was just a stooge. But now I really am, because about all I can do at the moment is to introduce two of the principals of the story...and they're not Jim and Pauline, either. Jim is staying at home today, looking after their little 3-year old daughter, Karen. But Pauline is here, and with her is Miss Mary Jo Thompson, Auglaize County home supervisor for the Farm Security Administration. Now I can't imagine two women getting together and not having a lot to say so -- how about the farm wife's angle on this business of buying a farm, and, once it's bought, using it so it won't wash away. Mary Jo, please take over.

THOMPSON

All right, Mr. Charles. Mrs. Bachman, isn't that just like a man? He runs out on us just when the hard work comes along.

BACHMAN

I guess we can carry on.

THOMPSON

Fine, and if you don't mind, Mrs. Bachman, I want to talk about you just a little bit. I think it's no more than fair to report that you're one of our good Farm Security cooperators. You've more than met your part of the bargain to feed your family well, to keep your family healthy and strong by growing and raising much of your own food. Tell us how you do it.

BACHMAN

It isn't difficult, Mary Jo. Jim has a natural bent toward livestock, so he doesn't mind helping me with a flock of chickens. This year we bought 500 baby chicks. We culled out the roosters at 10 weeks, sold most of them, cooked some, and still have 190 fine layers -- White Leghorns. They've been laying for several weeks, so we have eggs and poultry to eat and eggs to sell. And when a farmer's wife can sell eggs, she can always manage to buy groceries, and occasionally some knick-knacks.

THOMPSON

What knick-knacks, for instance?

BACHMAN

Oh, a haircut for papa and mama, a bit of candy or a little paint.

THOMPSON

Some of the men folks may think you mean rouge and lipstick when you say paint. Of course, I know you don't. Tell us what the paint is for.

BACHMAN

Well, this is getting rather funny, so much being said about the way Jim and I started housekeeping...with old broken chairs, tables, and so on, but it is the truth. Jim is awfully handy with a saw and hammer. He repaired the furniture and, of course, I had to have it painted.

THOMPSON

Was it your husband who finished up some of those beautiful old pieces of walnut and cherry furniture?

BACHMAN

Well, we both helped. Of course, the real fun was in finding the old furniture in the first place.

THOMPSON

Now about your kitchen -- I think we ought to say something about your nice kitchen or people will think you're still in the dark ages. Of course you like your new electric stove and refrigerator.

BACHMAN

They're swell. They're our luxuries, but we haven't minded skimping at all. We've lived comfortably enough. You remember helping me work out a foods and garden program?

THOMPSON

Oh, yes. How did your canning turn out this year?

BACHMAN

Real fine, Mary Jo. You know that old pressure cooker that Jim fixed up for me -- it would have to be an old one -- well, I canned 450 quarts of vegetables and fruits with it this summer. That's one thing I like about the help you folks in the Farm Security Administration give us: you make us see to it that we raise a lot of our own food, and believe me, it makes a difference in the grocery bill.

THOMPSON

That's one reason for it, Mrs. Bachman, and another reason is the family's health. That's important, and for another thing, we believe that soil conservation is important.

CHARLES

Pardon me, did you say soil conservation?

THOMPSON

Yes, I did say soil conservation. And that's another hobby of the Bachman family, isn't it, Mrs. Bachman?

BACHMAN

Yes, it is. Now that we have a farm of our own -- some soil of our own to save -- we are truly interested in farming it so that the land grows better. Jim studied farm management at the University and soil management is one thing he believes in. Our farm is only very gently rolling, yet Jim has noticed some soil erosion over on the back side of the place -- where run-off water has cut a small gully in an old dead furrow. He's going to fix that up. He has a drainage problem to solve, too, and that's a question of proper land use. Another thing, Jim uses properly balanced crop rotations. He grows clover and soybeans and plows some of these crops under to enrich the soil.

THOMPSON

Summing up, Mr. Charles, the Bachman family motto is "Everything has possibilities", and Jim and Pauline Bachman have made the most of those possibilities.

CHARLES

They certainly have, considering the success they've made out of other people's failures, and they're to be congratulated. Thank you both for being with us today, Mary Jo Thompson, Farm Security Administration home supervisor, and Mrs. Jim Bachman, of Auglaize County, Ohio.

ORGAN THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

CHARLES (on cue)

This is Gene Charles, speaking for the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. Be with us again next week at this same time, for another story of "Fortunes Washed Away."

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

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